

ANGRY BIRDS - THE REAL ISSUE

January 20, 2015 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

I received the following gracious communication from a pastor in regard to the report "Paul Chappell's Angry Birds" by Bob Kirkland, which we published from Pastor Kirkland's web site on December 18, 2014. This pastor said:

"Bro Cloud,

"As I always begin my emails to you, let me say that I have received your material for years (printed and electronic), and also make use of it in my own church. I believe you are a Godly man with a well balanced way of looking at most things. You and I would probably get along well, were we ever to meet and have opportunity to talk.

"I am in agreement with you about the CCM issue. I also believe churches are treading on dangerous ground to mess with it. It no doubt will be the spiritual demise of many good churches.

"I will have to say though, that this Angry Birds business is just plain silly and childish. Yes, I realize (according to the article) that Bro Chappell 'started it.' But Bro Kirkland answered, and then you reprinted his answer. This brother even went so far as to quote from the 'Angry Bird app's description' of itself, as though it were some type of Bible reference or something.

"I agree with the gist of the article, about being clear in reproof -- but for goodness' sake, is this REALLY what King James believing Baptist preachers are reduced to? Comparing one another to video games??? I bet the Devil's crowd would laugh themselves to death over this thing.

"I have never met any of you personally (although I did hear Bro Chappell preach once, and I have listened to and watched you on dvd, etc.). I have no doubt that you, Bro Kirkland and Bro Chappell are all good men. I also want to believe that you all are wise and mature enough to not fall into the trap of 'foolish talking' of Ephesians 5. ...

"I know that with a church and school the size of Bro Chappell's, it really is a 'public' issue and should be dealt with 'publicly.' I commend you for being willing to take him to task publicly, and I know that you face many repercussions for it.

"However, could I humbly admonish that you don't get pulled into childish silliness, which will take away from the respect and dignity of the Lord's work, of His Holy Word, and of your own reputable ministry. And, be aware that there are many other 'little' preachers, that will be even more easily carried away from the real issue at hand - into silliness.

If Bro Chappell wants to preach about cartoons, let him (that is probably because he know he's reaching shallow, worldly christians and that's all they could understand). He will give account for it. But the best way to re-butt is to preach the truth, from the Bible, in a godly way.

“These are just my opinions and observations.

“God bless you and the ministry.”

(The previous is an email from a pastor dated Dec. 19, 2014.)

REPLY FROM BROTHER CLOUD

Thank you so much for taking the time to write. I appreciate the input and have considered it. Your opinion in this is probably the one that prevails among independent Baptists.

On one level the issue could appear to be childish, but if you look at the big picture there are some extremely important issues at stake, and I don't believe I have descended to any sort of silliness. I like to laugh, and I laugh a lot. I even published a joke book many years ago, but when it comes to these articles and to what is happening in churches, I am a serious man and I deal with serious issues.

Bro. Kirkland was not preaching from a video game. The reference to the video game was simply to show the context of Chappell's statements and to help make the point that some issues are worth striving over.

The Angry Bird issue is most serious. It is a memorable current illustration of the points I made in the book *Why Most Independent Baptist Churches Will Be Emerging within 20 Years*.

One of the eight reasons I gave for this prediction is “the maligning of warning and reproof.” In 2011, when this book was first published, I wrote the following:

“The prevailing attitude toward warning and reproof was exemplified by a blog published by Pastor R.B. Ouellette's in June 2011 entitled ‘Chasing Buzzard.’ Though he began by saying that it is important to chase away the buzzards of compromise and error, he spent the largest percentage of his blog characterizing a ‘warning ministry’ as wrong-headed, dangerous, unfruitful, and ‘secondary.’

“It is typical among fundamental Baptist churches today for godly reproof to be treated as cheap gossip, as ‘throwing stones,’ as ‘hit pieces,’ as ‘shooting the wounded,’ as ‘touching the Lord's anointed,’ and other such things. [Now we can add ‘angry birds’ to that list.]

“According to the prevailing attitude, it is OK to give private warnings, but it is wrong to ‘attack’ a ‘man of God’ publicly. This is a neat trick that makes it impossible to effectively correct public error. If a preacher has a wide influence beyond the ‘walls’ of his own church through his writings, conferences, college, music, etc., the only way to help those who are being influenced negatively is to deal with error and compromise *in the public arena*. This type of thing is not a Matthew 18 matter; it is a 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15; 1 Peter 4:11; and Jude 3 matter. When we are commanded in Scripture to reprove error and to earnestly contend for the faith, we are nowhere told that we can do this only in private.

Churches that treat spiritual warnings as dangerous cannot deal effectively with the leaven of error and will therefore be corrupted. This is a divine law. 'Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' (1 Corinthians 5:6).

"Independent Baptist churches are encountering the hurricane force winds of apostasy in the form of the emerging church and all of its elements, such as the contemporary rock & roll philosophy ('cultural liberalism') that mocks strict holy standards of Christian living as legalism, modern textual criticism, Purpose Drivenism, self-esteemism, kingdom now replacement theology, Third Wave charismaticism, reconstructionism, ecumenical evangelism, C.S. Lewisism, Christian counseling psychobabble, Neo-orthodoxy, contemplative mysticism, John Piper's Christian hedonism, organic churchism, to name a few.

"When warnings are given about something like the downgrade of music standards in certain influential churches and schools and how dangerous that is, or the error of building an Independent Baptist 'friendship unity' on the basis of treating certain biblical issues as non-essentials,' those warnings are despised and the reprover is maligned.

"That is a recipe for spiritual destruction. When Israel demanded that the prophets preach only smooth things, her downfall was already sealed."

The previous is from *Why Most Independent Baptist Churches Will Be Emerging*, 2011, available as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

Pastor Chappell has been called the most influential IFB pastor, and from my perspective and experience, which is pretty large, I would agree. Further, the vast majority of influential IB preachers hold the same philosophy as Chappell espouses, and it bids ill for the present and the future.

I have witnessed what this very philosophy did to Highland Park Baptist Church and my alma mater Tennessee Temple over the past 40 years, as I described in the book "Why Most Independent Baptists Will Be Emerging within Twenty Years." Paul Chappell holds Lee Roberson's philosophy of what I call "soft separatism," and the result is going to be the same.

Chappell makes no distinction between self-seeking cranks and godly reprovers, between strife caused by the truth and strife caused by carnality. He fails to encourage those Christ lovers who reprove sin and error in obedience to God's Word (2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 2:15; Jude 3), which is a difficult enough task without being accused of being an "angry bird."

Throughout the blog, he takes Scriptures out of context and misapplies them, which is no light matter. He implies that strife is always wrong, and the one who causes it is an angry, self-seeking person who should be avoided.

Pastor Chappell has made this point often. It is one of his fundamental principles. It is also the working principle of Clarence Sexton, who also pastors one of the largest Independent Baptist churches and has one of the largest Independent Baptist Bible colleges. He has preached this philosophy loudly through his "friendship" conferences. A philosophy of "keep it positive, avoid personalities, don't name names, don't warn about independent Baptists" permeates these men's ministries.

But according to Scripture, there is righteous division, righteous controversy, righteous anger, even righteous hate.

“Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:128).

“And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other” (Mark 3:5).

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34).

“There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings” (John 10:19).

“When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts 15:2).

“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19).

The prophets caused a lot of strife and division. So did the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul.

AT THE VERY TIME WHEN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST PREACHERS SHOULD BE DOUBLING THEIR GUARD AGAINST COMPROMISE AND ERROR AND SPEAKING OUT AGAINST IT, THE MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS ARE SAYING STAY ON THE GOSPEL, DON'T WASTE TIME “CHASING BUZZARDS,” AND ABOVE ALL DON'T LISTEN TO THE “ANGRY BIRDS.”

Hundreds of preachers are being trained in this unscriptural philosophy at Crown Baptist College, Lancaster Baptist College, and at a lot of other places.

This is a foundational principle of New Evangelicalism. It is of the devil, and it will eventually destroy any good thing these men (Chappell, Sexton *et al.*) have stood for. When there is no judging, there is no spiritual protection. And when men can influence churches with their preaching, blogs, books, conferences, schools, and music without being called to task publicly, there is no possibility of correction or of helping those who are being led astray.

Furthermore, Chappell leaves the impression that the “birds” are angry for no good reason. He leaves the impression that the squabbles are about personal matters and “non-essentials,” which is not the case, at least not with many concerned men. We are dealing with important issues that will spell either blessing or destruction if not understood and dealt with properly. Issues such as music, separation, worldliness, pastoral authority, and the message and methods of evangelism are no light matters.

May the Lord bless you and give you much wisdom, my preacher friend.

One thing I know for sure, and one thing becomes more clear with each passing year, and that is that the Lord is good!

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